Global Leadership in the 21st Century

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Editorial Note: This article is the initial background paper for a 15-month project entitled "Global Leadership in the 21st Century" launched by WAAS in collaboration with the United Nations in Geneva at a one-day roundtable hosted by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, Baku, Azerbaijan on March 17, 2019. The paper explores fundamental questions in order to identify ways to consciously foster and accelerate the development of leadership so urgently needed to address the challenges and tap the opportunities for global progress in the 21st century.

Abstract

The world today possesses unprecedented opportunities and capabilities to promote global human welfare and well-being. But it is in urgent need of leadership to tap the opportunities and address the multidimensional challenges confronting humanity today. These challenges are a reflection of the urgent need to project a unifying global vision, build international support and multi-stakeholder commitment, enhance institutional effectiveness, and mobilize global society for effective action. The optimistic consensus that fueled progress at the end of the Cold War has disappeared. The momentum for collective action has dissipated. The recent retreat from multilateralism, democracy, economic cooperation, regional integration, arms control, cooperative security and multiculturalism undermines global cooperation at a time when it is urgently needed to achieve the development objectives of Agenda 2030, address existential ecological challenges, and prevent a relapse into strident nationalism and the Cold War competitive security.

The world is desperately in need of leadership at this critical juncture. Although leadership has most commonly taken the form of great personalities in the past, it is no longer limited to individuals. Leadership is a way of acting. It is a living social process that encompasses the whole society in which and on which it acts. It may be initiated by idealistic individuals or innovative organizations, but ultimately it has to percolate down to influence the actions

of many others in order to generate results. Outstanding individual leaders and the aspiring social collective are complementary forces. The essence of leadership is an inspiring vision of the future. That vision usually encompasses higher values, insightful ideas and growing awareness of untapped opportunities. It is fueled by the rising aspirations of the population transformed into intense social energies released into action. The results it achieves depend on the intensity of society's aspiration for accomplishment, the organization of the ideas and knowledge on which it is based, the clarity of the goals and plans, and the effectiveness of the institutional mechanisms through which it is implemented. Individuals can play a key leadership role in all stages of this process.

The process of leadership transcends the action of one or a few individuals. It includes generating awareness of unutilized social potentials, projecting higher organizational ideas, mobilizing the available global social energies and resources for practical application, strengthening the effectiveness of existing institutions of governance, and releasing a broad-based social movement to transform the compelling challenges confronting humanity today into catalysts for rapid global social evolution.

1. The Context

The end of the Cold War brought with it a period of unrivaled clarity, confidence and optimism regarding the future direction and destiny of humanity. The Iron Curtain was to be replaced by a single open global society. The nuclear arms race was to be permanently halted by a succession of arms control treaties and the dismantling of tens of thousands of nuclear warheads. The WTO presented the prospect of a single world market providing greater economic opportunities for people of all nations. The expansion of global financial markets led to massive investments in developing countries, far in excess of anything ever provided as foreign aid. The formation and rapid expansion of the European Union offered the promise of ever-increasing cooperation and integration of a continent that had been subjected to incessant warfare for centuries. And the unexpected birth of the World Wide Web soon emerged as the first truly global social system, linking billions of people together in ways that were previously unimaginable.

In spite of these impressive achievements and promising prospects, subsequent events during the last quarter century have not unfolded as anticipated. Economically, the 2008 financial crisis caused by unregulated international financial markets has shifted trillions of dollars of resources from investments in the real economy to short-term speculation. The global economy has yet to recover its previous buoyancy. Protectionist sentiments have reasserted even in the bastions of free trade. Economic inequality has risen to levels not seen since the 1920s. Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, remains high and faces the threat posed by the automated technologies of the 4ᵗʰ Industrial Revolution. Politically, there has been an unexpected retreat from democracy and the rise of populism and polarization among democratic electorates in many countries. The resurgence of neoliberalism threatens to unravel many of the important gains achieved by decades of social democracy. The growing dominance of money in politics and widespread persistence of corruption in many

forms are undermining confidence in the future of democracy. After two decades of rapid expansion, the European Union confronts serious problems of cohesion. Brexit is only the most serious of numerous symptoms of a loss of the shared vision that brought and bound European countries together. Multiple destabilizing attacks on the territorial integrity of nation-states have sundered the vision of peaceful coexistence. Nations are closing their borders in response to massive migrations of political, economic and environmental refugees on all continents. The reescalation of the nuclear arms race threatens to reverse the major progress on disarmament so recently achieved. There has been a decline in support for multilateral agreements and international organizations at the very time when more effective global governance is desperately needed. And most serious of all, environmental challenges threaten the lives and habitats of billions of people in this and future generations.

All these negative symptoms are the result of inadequate leadership. While there is a widespread consensus on the nature of the major political, economic, social, cultural and ecological challenges confronting humanity today, agreement is lacking regarding the best way to address them and also on the ultimate consequences or outcomes that can be achieved by coordinated global action. The world perceives its problems, but is largely unconscious of how to effectively address them. It lacks a vision of its collective potentials and a convincing narrative of how they can be tapped.

These challenges all share certain distinct characteristics. None of them can be adequately addressed by individual nation-states acting independently. All of them require a significant degree of concerted cooperative action at the global level. None of them can be effectively addressed without greater support by nation-states for global rule of law and global governance. All of them require the strengthening of international institutions acting on behalf of the world community as a whole. None of them can be fully addressed based on uni-disciplinary social science theories and models. All of them require a shift in intellectual perspective beyond the nation-state to the evolution of the global community. None of them can be successfully addressed solely by the actions of government. All of them require the understanding, support and active commitment of the media, academia, business, civil society and a social movement of the population at-large.

These challenges are manifestations of the urgent need for global vision, direction, organization and leadership. Effective global leadership alone can generate the awareness, understanding, willingness and organizational capacities needed to mobilize global society to fully address them. These challenges compel humanity to accelerate the transition from a group of independent nation-states into a cohesive world community with universally-accepted values, shared aspirations and effective international institutions. Existing social institutions resist change or adopt incremental measures where radical innovation is required. Society remains uninformed, complacent or in denial, in spite of massive efforts to generate awareness and stir nations and people to positive action.

Until the end of World War II, significant achievements were mostly the result of the pressure of extreme events, the violent exercise of power and massive social upheavals. Since then there has been a shift from revolution to evolution, from reliance on force to

reliance on understanding, rights and rule of law. The failure of effective leadership to emerge at the global level following the end of the Cold War has resulted in significant missed opportunities. The loose ends of the past still linger and come back to haunt us. The gap was filled for a time by promising ideas and opportunities generated by the founding of the European Union, WTO and the World Wide Web. But these ideas no longer suffice to guide and direct humanity's progress.

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Yet at the very time when traditional forms of leadership appear wanting, some remarkable developments signal the determination of the world community to forge ahead rather than retreat. Since the turn of the millennium, the UN has made unparalleled progress in building a global consensus around universal values and goals for humanity. The most encouraging positive development in recent years has been the adoption of Agenda 2030 by more than 190 UN member countries. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals represent an unprecedented consensus and commitment of the world community to collaborate for promoting the welfare and well-being of all human beings. The acceptance of the SDGs is a momentous achievement. It represents a shift from competitive nationalism to cooperative globalism or humanism based on our common humanity and shared aspirations. It is an outstanding instance of leadership at the global level. The vote by 122 nations in the UN General Assembly to establish a historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017, the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, is another important sign of global progress. The UN climate talks at Katowice in December 2018, which involved 195 UN member states, succeeded in creating a rule book for implementation of the 2015 Paris climate treaty. These talks signify a willingness for action, provided the right leadership can be provided. These achievements signal a convergence of vision and values by the nations of the world community and a growing commitment to collective action on a scale and at levels never before witnessed.

2. The Need for Global Leadership

Fundamental questions remain as to how to mobilize global society to convert these unprecedented advances into practical results. The human community is searching for a compelling vision of our collective future and for effective strategies and pathways for coordinated, mutually reinforcing global action. Leadership is needed to generate awareness of the enormous, unutilized global potentials that can be tapped to accelerate global progress. It is needed to challenge outmoded, unidimensional theories and compartmentalized models, narrow national and sectoral perspectives, piecemeal stakeholder strategies and fragmented institutional functioning that obstruct global social progress. It is needed to formulate comprehensive, integrated strategies and policies capable of mobilizing all stakeholders in the

global community and directing all the available global social energies for practical application. And, most of all, it is needed to fully unleash and mobilize the energies of global society, to release a broad-based social movement to transform the compelling challenges confronting humanity today into catalysts for rapid global social evolution. Leadership is needed at the level of local communities, nation-states, regional entities and international organizations to convert those capabilities into effective actions to achieve concrete, tangible results.

These needs raise fundamental questions regarding the nature of leadership and how it can be generated. Clearly, global leadership cannot be embodied in a single individual, institution or group. Global society is too vast, diverse and complex. It will require generation of an inclusive social movement fueled by a common vision, shared values, inspiring ideas, compelling goals, dynamic individuals, energized organizations and committed stakeholders. Building that consensus and forging that coalition is an act of true leadership which the world ardently aspires for and can fully respond to, as it did a quarter century earlier to bring down the Berlin Wall and authoritarian communism, end the Cold War and the nuclear arms race, democratize and liberalize Eastern Europe, reunite Germany, found an inclusive European Union, and usher in a period of unprecedented global peace and cooperation.

The motto of the World Academy of Art & Science is *leadership in thought that leads to action*. In 2013 WAAS partnered with the United Nations Office in Geneva to conduct an international conference on the need for a new paradigm in human development encompassing the main principles set forth in Agenda 2030. Since then, WAAS has conducted more than thirty conferences and workshops around the world in partnership with other institutions on human-centered economics, democracy, law, governance, science and technology, social power, education, creativity, leadership, ecology and social evolution in order to better understand the knowledge and theoretical framework, institutions and policies, social potentials and social processes necessary for transition to a human-centered development paradigm encompassing the goals of Agenda 2030. Our objective is to identify effective measures that can be taken to mobilize and direct the collective energies of humanity at the local, national and global level to generate guiding principles, energizing ideas and effective strategies for leadership to address these global challenges.

3. Historical Precedents

History is replete with striking examples of leadership of different varieties, at different levels and in different fields. On assuming office as President of the USA in 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt confronted the worst banking crisis in American history. The power of government and conventional economic policies had been insufficient to stop the rush of depositors to withdraw their savings from the banks, resulting in the failure of more than 10,000 American financial institutions. FDR realized that nothing he had learned of economic theory had prepared him for this situation and no power of government could compel the American people to stop the panic. He realized the real problem was psychological, rather than financial or economic. In the first of his famous fireside chats, he got on the radio and explained to the people that the real source of the crisis was their loss of confidence and trust in the system. He concluded with his famous words, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." He appealed to

the American spirit. He asked the people to redeposit their money in the banks. He promised necessary reforms to protect their hard earned savings. Remarkably, the people responded and the crisis was stopped. FDR was known as a great communicator who could inspire trust in the people. But no matter how great his oratory skills were, he could never have performed this incredible feat on his own. His real strength was that he was in tune with the mind and pulse of the nation, the hopes, aspirations and values of the people. Leadership always takes place in a wider social context and understanding that context is critical to providing effective leadership.

So too, the remarkable events that took place in the USSR after the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev to become Secretary General of the Communist Party cannot be fully understood either as the act of an extraordinary individual or as the result of inevitable circumstances beyond anyone's control. We tend to view events in the moment and lose sight of the historical precedents and underlying social currents that shape leaders and determine the results of their actions. The truth is far more complex. The forces that prompted Gorbachev to introduce his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* can be traced back to the time he was a university student when Khrushchev denounced Stalin's crimes against the Soviet people soon after his death. This shocking revelation had its impact on the minds of idealistic youth such as Gorbachev. So too, the forceful suppression of the Hungarian Revolution a few years later destroyed the prevailing myth that all Soviet Union's allies were willing members of the Eastern bloc. This disillusionment was reinforced twelve years later when Soviet tanks poured into Czechoslovakia to suppress the democratic movement known as the Prague Spring. Gorbachev acknowledged the importance of these events when he was asked in 1987 about the difference between his policies and those of Czech Prime Minister Dubček in 1968. He answered, "The difference is nineteen years." The seeds of *glasnost* were born long before they sprouted and Gorbachev's remarkable initiatives to transform the USSR were an expression of a long-suppressed aspiration of a younger, more educated generation for freedom.

In some cases, the historical roots of great events date back so far that it is difficult to find their origin. The reunification of Germany in 1991 came so suddenly that even as recently as June 1989, Gorbachev and German Chancellor Kohl were convinced it would take several decades at the very least. Their actions in facilitating the event were certainly significant, but do not tell the whole story. The forces compelling the reunification of Germany date back to the origins of the Holy Roman Empire in the 9ᵗʰ century and the central role Germany has played in the political life of Europe ever since. The significance of German unity was well understood by Napoleon, who successfully dissolved the empire a thousand years after its birth. It was understood by Hitler who tried to revive it, by the Russians and Americans who divided it, and by Gorbachev and Kohl who presided over its reunification.[1]

History books commonly describe the League of Nations as a failed attempt and its leader Woodrow Wilson as a failed leader. But, in fact, the key elements of the League were carried forward by its successor, the United Nations. Many of the same people who had fashioned the international administration of the League migrated and took up similar positions in the UN and implemented similar ideas. The League was not a failure, but rather a preliminary experimental attempt at international governance that could not succeed until global public

sentiment arising from the monstrous suffering of the Second World War had exhausted the ambitions of nationalism and the energies of aggression. Wilson was not a failed leader, but simply one who voiced a call that would gain acceptance two decades later.

4. Social Preparedness

Humanity looks to strong leaders to guide it through challenging times. Great individual leaders arise in times of great crises and transition points such as the American Revolution, the Second World War, the movement for Indian Independence, the Civil Rights Movement, and the end of Apartheid. But a closer analysis reveals that *great leaders are themselves the products as well as the catalysts of the awakening of the societies in which they arise. Outstanding individual leaders and aspiring social collectives are complementary forces.* Leaders arise to give conscious expression to emerging social ideas and ideals. The most visionary of those leaders come to prepare society by projecting seed ideas that take root and blossom afterwards. Today that vision is obscured by confusion and dampened by widespread pessimism. New leadership is needed to both project and respond to a clearer vision of the future humanity aspires to realize.

Leadership always takes place in a context. No matter how great the individual leader, the results always depend on the readiness of society to respond. That is why we witness so often throughout history the gathering of great leaders at particular moments in history, rather than their equal distribution in space and time. It is no coincidence that Washington, Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton and Monroe all arose to leadership positions at the birth of the USA. Indian Independence was similarly blessed by a confluence of outstanding individuals at the same moment in time—Gandhi, Nehru, Rajaji, Patel, and Prasad are only the better known of them. So too, Churchill, FDR, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini—though very different in personalities, values and aspirations—were all the product of the same age and forces which compelled global society to make the first tentative transition beyond the nation-state.

To truly understand a single instance of leadership we must be able to trace it back to its distant origins in thought and in the conscious or unconscious sentiments of the society in which it occurred. To truly understand the remarkable technological leadership of Steve Jobs, we must trace back the graphic user interface, mouse and other technologies he introduced in the mid-1980s to the work of Douglas Engelbart at Stanford Research Institute two decades earlier. The genius of Steve Jobs' leadership was not his technological insight or inventiveness. In the early days at Apple that role was played by its co-founder Steve Wozniak, a brilliant and creative engineer who pioneered the personal computer. Jobs' real genius was in sensing the aspirations of society and finely attuning his actions to synchronize with that pulse. In many ways Jobs was a typical American of this period. He was born and raised in a country that worships mechanical inventiveness. Americans made building, repairing and playing with machines a national pastime. Jobs grew up during the early days of the transition from mechanics and electricity to electronics. He was a product of the Hippie Movement, which valued personal freedom and individuality and feared authority and conformity above all else. He understood the deep anxiety generated among youth by the idea of huge mainframe

computers running the world. He saw the PC as an instrument to empower the individual rather than dominate and replace him. The release of the Macintosh in 1984 was hailed as the start of a spiritual revolution. Even more than the products he created, Jobs became an icon and visionary leader of creative individuality. His vision was matched by a remarkable capacity to think outside the box and see beyond 'what is' to 'what could be'. With the birth of the World Wide Web, he saw the possibility of making the PC a part of a global interconnected system. This led to the introduction of the iPod and transformation of the music industry. That same vision gave birth to the iPhone and iPad and made Apple the most valuable company in the history of the world.

5. Seed-Ideas

It is noteworthy that the acts of leadership by FDR, Churchill and Gorbachev were very largely conceptual, at least during their initial stage. They perceived the challenges they confronted differently than others did and succeeded in communicating their new perception to other people. FDR had the insight to understand that the root cause of the US banking crisis in 1933 was psychological, not economic or financial, and that the only effective remedy was to change the way people thought and felt. In Gorbachev's case the actual scope for action was severely limited by the power of entrenched forces within the Communist Party which he headed. Unable to impose radical reforms, he did the next best thing. He opened the windows to the world so the Soviet people could see for themselves what the rest of the world was like. That awakened an aspiration and released a movement which the force of authoritarianism could no longer contain either in the USSR or its satellites.

History extols Abraham Lincoln for abolishing slavery in America after defeating the Confederate army in the Civil War. But this is a short-sighted view of a great achievement. The right to freedom had been growing in Europe for centuries before it was enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence. Its application to black Africans spread with increasing rapidity from 1700 onward. A growing movement against slavery began in Europe and gradually spread around the world. At first, nations banned slavery in the home countries, then they banned the slave trade, and finally they banned slavery in their colonies. By the time Lincoln came to power all of the northern states in the USA already had laws banning slavery. Lincoln's heroic idealistic leadership road on the growing momentum of this global social movement irresistibly advanced toward completion.

Freedom is a fundamental and universal value that has fueled revolutionary movements for millennia before the ancient Israelites sought to escape from Egypt. Throughout the world, the call for freedom originated at the higher levels of society when the powerful and privileged demanded recognition of their rights, as the feudal English barons won concessions from King John in the Magna Carta. Values such as freedom, equality, rights, truth and self-determination have played a powerful leadership role for as long as human beings could think and act for themselves. These values are enshrined in the demand of the American colonists for no taxation without representation, the Communist Manifesto, and every revolutionary and evolutionary movement founded on the aspiration for greater human rights and dignity. On becoming Prime Minister, Churchill did not consult his cabinet or parliament or conduct

a referendum to determine the will of the people to fight the Axis Powers. He consulted his own deepest perception and feeling and spoke on behalf of the entire nation. He stirred the nation to incredible acts of bravery by appealing to the English love of freedom with the words "We shall never surrender". The magnificent response of the British people to his call shows how well he had understood and how deeply his words gave expression to their determination. The power of FDR's words arose from their appeal to American pride in its self-reliance. Martin Luther King knew the power of ideas when he said, "I have a dream". For the Russian people Gorbachev's *glasnost* carried the power of revolution.

6. Organization

Individual leaders, ideas and social readiness are essential determinants, but they are not adequate in themselves to account for remarkable acts of leadership. Organization is another critical ingredient. The leader may inspire the people, awaken their aspiration and release their energy, but no leader can accomplish without the instrumentation of organization. For Washington that organization was the Continental Army which he led throughout the American Revolution. For Gandhi it was the Indian National Congress, which had been founded in the late 19th century but was shaped by him into an effective vehicle for independence. In some cases, the organization appears to be of paramount importance and the leader of secondary significance and in others the appearance is reversed. But in all cases their complementary roles are of vital importance.

In the mid-1960s, India faced the threat of dire famine, which FAO predicted could lead to 10 million deaths or more. C. Subramaniam was a senior Congress political leader from the days of the freedom struggle who came from a farming community in the South. Asked to assume responsibility for averting the imminent threat of massive starvation, he declared in Parliament the goal of making India self-sufficient in food grains within five years. To a nation habitually dependent on massive food aid from the West, his proclamation was met with laughter and derision, even by members of his own party. But he did not stop with proclaiming a goal. He followed through by creating a host of new agencies designed to support the rapid transformation of Indian agriculture, including organizations for hybrid seed production, fertilizer manufacture, warehousing, marketing and distribution of grain surpluses to deficit areas, and a commission for ensuring remunerative prices to farmers. He organized 100,000 demonstration plots on farmers' lands to demonstrate advanced production techniques. He also reorganized the nation's agricultural research institutes to ensure coordination of all their activities. As he often insisted, the government did not solve India's food problem. The farmers did. His strategy was based on an understanding of the psychology of uneducated farmers and finely tuned to win their support and released their initiative to enhance production. Within five years India's foodgrain production rose by 50% and it doubled in 10 years. The country was already exporting surpluses by the early 1970s. By then India's Green Revolution was spreading to countries around the world. What began as an idea in the mind of a visionary leader, acquired power through development of a new social organization and resulted in a broad-based social movement of the whole society.

There are countless examples of this type—many of which achieved their goals without any support or involvement of government. India's IT Revolution from the mid-1980s was

supported by favorable public policies, but it was led and carried out almost exclusively by the private sector, including what soon became the two largest IT training companies in the world. In time it transitioned into a mass social movement that captured the imagination of the enormous urban population of the whole country. From a mere US$10 million in 1985, the country's IT exports have risen more than 10,000 fold to over US$100 billion.

Sometimes a movement can be unleashed by the token initiative of a small group, formal or informal. The publication of *Limits to Growth* by the informal group of concerned intellectuals who called themselves the Club of Rome became a powerful voice of the global environmental movement. Since its publication in 1972, the book has sold more than 30 million copies in 30 languages. The report became the first serious intellectual challenge to the dangers and unsustainability of mindless, wasteful, resource-intensive economic growth. Another think tank, the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1995 along with one of its founders, Joseph Rotblat, who was also a founder of WAAS three years later. The prize was awarded for their efforts to outlawing the use and possession of nuclear weapons which led to the landmark Advisory opinion of the World Court. The transformative impact of Muhammad Yunus' Grameen Bank as a non-governmental organization in rural Bangladesh led to the rapid spread of microcredit institutions around the world.

7. Social Movements

But leadership is not confined to the acts of great individuals or organizations. Sometimes the movement rises from a tiny spark and grows into a major conflagration because the time and conditions are ready for a small token act to set it off. Rosa Parks' token act in segregationist Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 was an act of individual leadership that helped spark the American Civil Rights Movement. When the driver of the bus informed her that black passengers needed to move further to the rear of the bus to accommodate white passengers in front, she simply refused to move. Arrested and fined $8 by a local judge, Rosa refused to pay the fine and chose to remain in jail instead. Soon the black citizens of Montgomery staged a boycott of the city's public transport system that brought it to the point of bankruptcy, until Montgomery was forced to abolish its segregationist local law. A local clergyman named Martin Luther King seized the opportunity and took steps which led eventually to the abolition of all legal forms of racial segregation and discrimination in America.

In 1964, the Free Speech Movement began at the University of California at Berkeley as a demand of graduate students for a voice in university governance. The movement had a few informal leaders but no formal organization or structure. The decision to stage a sit-in at Sproul Hall, the university's administration building, prompted the university to call in the police. Soon confrontations between demonstrators and teargas-wielding police became a frequent occurrence. The demands of the protesters grew more intense and soon spread to encompass anti-Vietnam War protests, the rights of women and blacks, environmental protection and many other causes. Within four years, campus protests had spread from Berkeley to campuses around the USA, overseas and even behind the Iron Curtain. In some instances, we remember the leaders and in others we soon forget them, but the process is the

same in all cases. It begins with an inspiration, a vision, a value, an aspiration or an idea in the mind of one or a few people and gradually grows in reach and intensity until it captures the minds and hearts of many individuals and groups, institutionalizes itself through one or many formal or informal organizations, and reaches out and down to permeate the society of which it is a part and a leader.

"All acts of leadership mature only when the ideas, values, goals, aspirations and intentions of the leader awaken and release the energy and inspiration of other individuals, acquire the power for implementation through organizations, and express in the general movement of the community, the nation or world. Leadership is a process, not merely a person."

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8. Token Initiatives

The history of leadership confirms that even in cases where there appears to be no scope for effective action, token initiatives can be remarkably powerful. When Mahatma Gandhi announced that India's freedom struggle must be completely non-violent, the British Raj sighed in relief in the conviction that it posed no threat to their continued rule by force of arms. But when Gandhi called on the people of India to march to the seashores and make salt in violation of British law that taxed this commodity, he demonstrated a way in which the entire nation could reject British authority without firing a shot. Alarmed by his success, the British kept him in prison until he got malaria and then they quickly released him for fear that they might be blamed for his death while in prison. An infectious mosquito proved as powerful as an armed prison break.

Nixon's surprise trip to China which opened up commercial relations between the erstwhile enemies, Gandhi's Salt March, the Boston Tea Party, Paul Revere's ride, FDR's fireside chat, the sit-in at Sproul Hall, Rosa Parks' refusal to stand, Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in 1517, and Churchill's defiant speech on blood, sweat, tears and toil illustrate the symbolic power of apparently small, insignificant acts in transforming inspired ideas, values and goals into effective action in the real world.

9. The Process of Leadership

These historical examples illustrate the twin dimensions of leadership—leadership as a person and leadership as an act or a process. These two dimensions are inseparable. They always appear together. All acts of leadership originate in the mind or heart of an individual or small group, however long in the past they may have been. All acts of leadership mature only when the ideas, values, goals, aspirations and intentions of the leader awaken and release the energy and inspiration of other individuals, acquire the power for implementation

through organizations, and express in the general movement of the community, the nation or world. Leadership is a process, not merely a person. True leadership results in a complete act that encompasses all the stages from conception to execution and achievement of results. Leadership is the instrument for all new feats of accomplishment, development, creativity and social evolution.

Leadership may be an initiative from above by a fresh act of conception in the mind of a representative individual which is progressively translated into action by society. Or it may be initiated from below by the emergence of an unconscious aspiration in society that gradually seeks for means to find self-expression through receptive individuals who give voice to the aspiration of the collective. However it begins, it always encompasses both ends of the spectrum which are inseparable. The ideas of a unique individual do not acquire the power to move the society. It is the ideas of the representative individual who gives voice to what the collective is silently aspiring for that are received and followed by others.

Leadership occurs at many levels and in all fields of life. Mental leadership gives rise to new ideas in philosophy, new scientific discoveries and technological innovations, and forms of creativity. Social leadership gives rise to new organizations, systems and social innovations. Physical leadership gives rise to new types of actions, such as the explorers who discovered the New World in their quest for a route to India. Physical leadership seeks to satisfy needs. Social leadership seeks to acquire greater power. Mental leadership seeks new ideas and knowledge. Spiritual leadership seeks to affirm higher values. The spiritual leader is a definer of values.

10. Who is a Leader?

The qualities of leadership have been a favorite subject of historical research and popular management books for decades. Stereotypes about leadership pervade all national cultures and have been shaped by history, literature, legend, the media and, most especially, modern cinema. The American stereotype of the self-reliant, masculine cowboy hero who never shrinks from a fight and never loses is pervasive, though the greatest and most revered American leaders—Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and FDR—do not at all fit that description. So powerful is this mythical image of the strong, aggressive leader that the presidents of the two most militarily powerful nations—Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin—both portray themselves in similar terms and are lost in mutual admiration.

Even in the corporate world, this persona is far from the norm. Jim Collins' best-selling business book *Good to Great* systematically analyzed the characteristics of the leaders of America's most successful corporations and discovered that the most salient feature they shared was a sense of humility. His research showed that leaders who have brought the 'Good to Great' transformation are not the ones who are charismatic or big personalities. Rather they tend to be quiet, modest and deliberate. They are the ones who have the combination of humility and professional will. They think long term and pursue the welfare of the organization rather than their own personal benefit. Their defining characteristic is the willingness to take responsibility for their actions and those of their team and accept

the consequences.[2] The confusion of effective leadership with egotism is a common error, both among would-be leaders and those who look back on their achievements in retrospect. Leaders inspire others. Egotists offend all but their sycophants. Egotists seek positions of prestige and work of importance. Aspiring leaders accept all the work that needs to be done, however mundane, and execute it so perfectly that it becomes extraordinary. They make every work they do important rather than seek importance. Recognition and prestige come as a result.[3]

Napoleon has been ranked among the greatest military leaders of all time and extolled for his keen insight, acute perception and rapid decision-making. But the real key to his military success was psychological. As Clausewitz observed, the most important characteristic of great military leaders is not physical bravery, but moral courage—by moral, he means the psychological courage to accept responsibility for decisions, no matter how grave the consequences.[4] Leaders do not just take responsibility for their own acts, but for everything that occurs under their watch. They take *consciousness responsibility* for what others say and do with or without their knowledge and permission. This capacity is among the most demanding and difficult for human beings to acquire because it eliminates the option of looking for scapegoats, vilifying and passing the blame onto others. The psychological intensity required to adopt this attitude marks an individual as extraordinary and qualified for leadership potential.

Great leaders not only accept responsibility, they are exhilarated by the challenges they confront—as Churchill reportedly felt when he heard that France had surrendered to the Nazis and England had to stand all alone in the war. They also exhibit the capacity to pass on that inspiration to others. Shakespeare depicted this quality in Henry V's address to the English forces at Agincourt before leading them to victory over an experienced French army more than three times England's size. Napoleon believed and demonstrated that the psychological attitude of an army is at least three times as important as its physical numbers. Tolstoy referred to this quality in *War and Peace* as the 'spirit of the army'. This is not merely the stuff of legends and history. Great political and business leaders and team leaders in sports and social work exhibit the capacity to multiply the effective strength of their forces many times over their *paper strength*. Steve Jobs did it when he resumed leadership of a rapidly declining Apple Computers in 1996 at a time when the company's future looked so bleak that Michael Dell advised Jobs to liquidate the company. The leader is one who can evoke that spirit in his or her followers.

High energy is a notable attribute of great leaders. Napoleon, Washington, Theodore Roosevelt, Churchill, FDR, Gandhi, Nehru, Mao, Steve Jobs, Thomas Watson of IBM and many other types of leaders were known for their near inexhaustible fund of energy and their capacity to release it in others by a process of contagion. Energy is the result of aspiration, of willed determination to accomplish. The source of that energy in the leader is not limited by individual capacity. It is universal. The awakened aspirations of the society are an unlimited source of energy for those who know how to tap it. The energy expressed by leaders arises from the ability to identify with and tap into the universal energy of those they lead. Great

leaders come alive when they face an audience of their followers or command vast numbers for a great enterprise, as Mahatma Gandhi, Churchill, Martin Luther King and Steve Jobs came alive in front of huge audiences. The larger the numbers, the greater the energy released. That capacity for identification is not merely mental. Political and social leaders forge a vital, emotional relationship with others and expand by the exchange of energy, just as intellectual leaders thrive on the energy of intellectual exchange with others and great athletes and warriors are energized by the physical danger of combat with opponents.

The age-old debate about whether leaders are made or born overlooks the importance of social context in the making of a leader. In undeveloped societies with low levels of organization and little support for individual development, native capacity and family background are the most important determinants. In highly organized modern societies which systematically develop their organizational capabilities and the capacities of their individual members through education and training, nurture becomes a more important factor than nature. During the 1980s Silicon Valley startups were populated by large numbers of former IBM executives whose former training and experience qualified them to effectively lead new organizations.

Qualities of leadership also vary depending on whether the field of expression is mental, social or physical. The capacity of the original thinker to pioneer new ideas requires an acute awareness of the explicit assumptions and implicit premises that limit current thinking. They develop an intuitive sense of the characteristic limitations of mental reasoning that prevent others from escaping the boundaries of the prevailing conceptual framework. Arthur Conan Doyle portrays this ability in Sherlock Holmes, who is conscious of the common pitfalls of logical deduction and has trained himself to avoid the mistakes made by Scotland Yard.

The tendency of mind to give greater significance and reality to the past and present than the future is another characteristic limitation summed up in common phrases such as "I'll believe it when I see it" or "If this were really possible, it would have already been said or done". The physicality of our thought processes prevents us from perceiving what is possible, even when it is right around the corner. The predominant influence of the past and present on our thinking about the future explains why Gorbachev, Kohl and virtually everyone else with intimate knowledge of the situation failed to anticipate the sudden reunification of Germany until it was just on the verge of taking place. It also explains why the victorious nations which structured the UN system in 1945 to preserve their power and preserve the existing colonial empires could not foresee or imagine that within a decade virtually all the great empires of the prewar period would disappear.[5] Nor could they anticipate that the 51 members who originally signed the UN Charter would multiply to 97 within two decades and eventually to almost 200. Their stated intention had been to limit the number of new member nations, especially the smaller ones which would become an unwieldy collective impossible to manage. The birth of the Non-Aligned Nations and the dominant voice of developing countries in the UN General Assembly was never envisioned by the UN's founders a decade before it became a reality.[6] These are examples in which the momentum of social forces overtook and surpassed the capacity of leaders to anticipate.

Mental and spiritual leaders are those who can imagine and envision a future very different than the past, as the Indian sage Sri Aurobindo did when he called for complete independence of India from British rule in 1904 when India's elite aspired only for representative government under British authority. The authors of the American Declaration of Independence had the mental idealism to proclaim the right of all citizens to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness at a time when slavery was legal and many signatories to that document owned slaves. Apart from the hypocrites, there were some like Washington who saw and believed in the necessity of abolishing slavery and had the temerity to proclaim their belief on parchment long before it could be realized in fact. C. Subramaniam had the capacity to perceive and the ability to inspire India to pursue the goal of self-sufficiency in food grains. His commitment and enthusiastic determination to achieve it released the energy of his peers, set in motion the apparatus of government and motivated tens of millions of farmers to achieve it.

> *"The adoption of the 17 SDGs by the entire world community is a rare and remarkable instance of mental, political and social leadership at the global level unprecedented in its scope, depth and significance to the future of humanity."*

Effective leaders must master the process of translating their personal perspective into the shared vision, values and goals of the groups they lead; releasing and directing the energies of other people to commit and powerfully pursue this direction; and either create or mold an organization to coordinate and channel those energies into effective action. The vision, values, goals and organization may vary, but the process remains the same.

Vital or social leaders also require the capacity to envision radical change and work for it. Without that vision, they cannot release the energy and determination needed to survive extreme adversity. It was Washington's faith in the future of America that kept his army alive and intact during the harsh Valley Forge winter and against the greatest military force of the world at that time. The principal strength of vital leaders is this capacity to inspire and motivate other people to action and to develop and harness the power of organization to direct those human energies. FDR was extremely personable and a great communicator more than he was a great thinker, though his insight into the cause of the banking panic and feelings of the American people was deeply perceptive. Churchill was far from inspiring in his personal relations, but he knew how to inspire the nation to unimagined feats of heroism. Gandhi proclaimed the lofty ideal of non-violence and persuaded the Indian people to embrace it, but his role in building the Indian National Congress was equally impressive. The greatest reason for the successful transition of India from a British colony to an independent nation was Gandhi's capacity to identify, attract, develop and inspire a generation of second level leaders such as Nehru, Patel and Rajaji to succeed him.

Who is a leader? Inspired individuals, ideas, values, organizations and social movements all play the role of leading the society forward in its evolutionary march. The quest for

effective leadership in times of trial should encompass all these dimensions of the process. In all cases the energy that drives the process is the energy of the collective in which the aspiration arises and which responds to the call of leadership. This explains the remarkable and seemingly miraculous impact that a single individual, idea, or event can have on the life of humanity. It explains the reason why one person can change the world—for though the conscious initiation may begin with a single person or event, it is really the energy of the entire collective that is ultimately responsible for the achievement.

Leadership and morality seem often to be in conflict. We cannot deny the extraordinary capacities of a Hitler or Stalin but are naturally reluctant to discuss them in company with a Washington, Lincoln or Gandhi. Yet accomplished leaders share many characteristics even when their values are opposite and regardless of whether their work is to destroy or to create. There are leaders that carry society forward and there are others that take it back. There are leaders who live for benefit of others and those who expect everyone to serve their own will and needs.

11. Global Leadership Challenge

Over the last two centuries leadership has emanated from many different sources to project new ideas, ideals, values and initiatives to foster the development of global society. International organizations and diplomats, nation-states and national political leaders, visionary thinkers, peace groups, individuals and organizations of scientists, lawyers, physicians, and technocrats, the business community, think tanks, NGOs, religious groups, cultural organizations and many others have all contributed to global leadership. Today new thinking and leadership initiatives are needed at all these levels.

More than ever before, international institutions have a critical role to play in global affairs, as demonstrated by the recent initiatives on climate change, the SDGs and the abolition of nuclear weapons. Still, much greater progress is needed to halt and reverse the erosion of multilateralism. Urgent efforts are needed to formulate coherent concepts and strategies for the emergence of effective global leadership in the 21ˢᵗ century. The emergence of international institutions during the 20ᵗʰ century was the result and response to the suffering and waste inflicted by two horrendous world wars. It was fueled by humanity's rising aspiration for an effective means for peaceful collaboration in shared pursuit of universal values and goals. Today's institutions evolved from ideas and initiatives of leaders and organizations in earlier decades dating back to more than a century. What we do now will shape the course of what is to come. Much can be done by existing international institutions to enhance their internal functioning and external impact. But effective leadership of and by these unique institutions depends fundamentally on the level of awareness, commitment and determination of the people who lead them, their member nation-states and the world's people to forge stronger, more resilient instruments for global governance. Strengthening that awareness and building commitment are vital.

12. Leadership for the SDGs

The adoption of the 17 SDGs by the entire world community is a rare and remarkable

instance of mental, political and social leadership at the global level unprecedented in its scope, depth and significance to the future of humanity. Agenda 2030 embodies in compact form humanity's collective aspiration to create a world that promotes the welfare and well-being of all its members. The readiness of the world community to accept these goals and the infectious energy with which it has inspired countless organizations to work for their realization is a measure of the social preparedness of humanity for a quantum leap in human development. The persistent efforts of the UN over decades have been an important factor in creating that preparedness. The critical leadership challenge today is for the global community, its nation-states and constituent organizations to release the inspired energy and dynamism of its own people and that of other stakeholders at the global, national and local level for rapid and effective implementation of those goals.

What means and methods are available to develop the necessary leadership to achieve these goals? Global leadership can be achieved in multiple ways—through transformative ideas, inspired individuals, and progressive institutions. In the absence of strong individual leaders and effective institutions, a shared vision supported by transformative ideas and practical opportunities can be a powerful and effective means to guide collective human behavior, as UNDP's concept and measurement of human development showed in the late 1980s. The essence of effective leadership is always a compelling vision of the future that can inspire and motivate people to positive collaborative action.

Since aspiration is the driver of all human progress, the first step would be to raise that aspiration to the maximum level possible. Our aspiration is an expression of our consciousness and our consciousness is a function of our awareness. Awareness of the potentials for high achievement is a great motivator. Even greater is the capacity to make real and tangible the anticipated benefits that high achievement will bring.

One obstacle to achievement of the SDGs is the difficulty people encounter in even imagining how life would be on earth if and when Agenda 2030 is accomplished. What kind of world will we be living in? How will it differ from the world of today? What will be the impact on the propensity for war, violence, drug addiction and terrorism when every job seeker has access to gainful remunerative employment opportunities and is equipped with the skills needed to qualify for them? What will be the impact on fertility rates, population growth, mortality rates, healthcare, cultural understanding and tolerance when every human being has access to affordable quality education? What will be the impact on social stability, harmony and human security when inequality is vastly reduced to eradicate the tensions and frustrations arising from the blatant injustice and unfairness of prevailing social systems? What will be the impact on human life and health when the pollution of air and water is eliminated? What will be the impact on our sense of security and confidence when all nation-states are fully committed to address the underlying causes of climate change and the rampant squandering of the earth's resources? And, most importantly of all, we must ask what will be the result of achieving these goals on the peace, sense of ease and well-being of people who have outgrown the need to constantly struggle for their survival or compete with one another for greater material accumulation at the expense of their own psychological fulfilment and inner joy?

We do not have clear answers to any of these questions today. Indeed, we do not even ask the questions and seek to answer them. We know the SDGs are right and good in themselves, but how can we expect Agenda 2030 to fully release the enthusiastic energy of the entire global community to achieve them when the outcome of that achievement remains vague and intangible? A concerted effort to answer these questions, however tentatively and imperfectly, would be one concrete measure of leadership that can be collectively undertaken under the auspices of the UN by a community of stakeholders including national governments, academies, research institutes, universities, corporations and NGOs.

> *"Leadership in thought among scientists, artists and intellectuals is desperately needed to override the pressures of dogma, self-interest and careerism masquerading as knowledge."*

But energy is not enough. The energy released by humanity's aspiration and awareness has to be focused and directed to transform it into an effective force. The 17 SDGs and 169 specific targets do provide a general direction. But that is insufficient. For each of the goals and targets strategies need to be formulated and plans developed for implementation at the level of communities, organizations, nations and the world. That still is not enough. The strategies and plans conceived to achieve each of these goals and targets need to be coordinated and harmonized with one another to ensure that forward progress in one area does not further aggravate and obstruct progress in others. So also, we need to ensure that the actions implemented by different organizations at different levels of global society do not conflict with and undermine progress at other points. The shifting of manufacturing capacities from the most economically-advanced nations to developing countries will only reduce industrial emissions and energy consumption of some countries while proportionately or disproportionately increasing that of others, with no overall beneficial effect on humanity and the world as a whole. These questions too need to be asked and answered on a war footing in order to build full confidence that our strategies for achieving the SDGs will truly result in the anticipated benefits. The very process of collaborating on an effort of this magnitude and complexity will promote an unprecedented level of exchange of information and experience and a spirit of cooperation and collaboration in working for the collective benefit of the whole human community.

Granted that leadership succeeds in fully releasing the energies of humanity and focusing it through effective strategies as effective force for accomplishment, the next great leadership challenge will be to restructure and fine-tune organizations at the global, national and local level to align their goals, values, policies and performance with the overall objectives of the SDGs. This will require massive efforts to alter the laws, rules, procedures and incentives that shape the present working of our social, economic and political systems. A complete reframing of our institutions would have immense benefits, but it will also encounter immense resistance and take a long time, unless revolutionary forces rise up to demand radical changes on a massive scale, such as those which followed the introduction of *glasnost*

and *perestroika* in the late 1980s leading in quick succession to the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communism, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the disarming of 50,000 nuclear warheads. Since we cannot afford to wait that long or anticipate such a revolutionary upheaval to bring it rapidly about, the logical course is to identify and implement every known modification in the existing system that can commence the process of restructuring in the hope that these changes will serve as token initiatives to further release the energy, aspiration, awareness and commitment of global society for more rapid and comprehensive change. That is an effective leadership strategy that has been adopted by great leaders from time immemorial.

13. Need for Transformative Ideas, New Theory and Models

All these leadership initiatives will generate tangible benefits within limits. But they will not result in the fastest, most effective and beneficial outcomes. For they are circumscribed and confined within a narrow and rigid set of concepts, assumptions and theories that severely limit our freedom of thought and action. Efforts to evolve and project a unifying, positive vision and roadmap are impeded by outmoded ideas and orthodoxies, fragmented concepts and theories, discordant perceptions and beliefs, conflicting ambitions, uncoordinated strategies and fragmented competitive institutions. Much of the ideological warfare in the social sciences today resembles the ideological fervor of opposing religious tenets in early times which divided major religions from each other and also from proponents of different sects of their own central faith. And like the religious wars of the past, ideological differences very often pose as mask and justification for struggles for political, social and economic power. We cannot immediately banish the age-old seeking for superior power and advantage by different social and national grouping. But we can impartially inquire, examine and expose the underlying premises and consequences of self-interested rationalization formulated in the disguise as social science. Leadership in thought among scientists, artists and intellectuals is desperately needed to override the pressures of dogma, self-interest and careerism masquerading as knowledge.

The entire world community agrees on the need for achieving the SDGs, but the ideas, strategies and policies remain focused on the action of individual nation-states to address issues that require collective action by all states and coordinated action by the international community based on a global vision. The world community has agreed on the goals. It must now agree on the means to achieve them and the state of the world if we succeed. We need leadership to guide us to think as a whole and act as a whole.

Intellectual leadership is needed to shift the focus from knowledge and actions beneficial to the nation-state to that which will benefit the entire world community and all humanity. Today national economic policies are based on social theories designed to maximize the power of nations rather than the well-being of all humanity. Most theoretical assumptions and economic models are based primarily on impact at the national level without taking into account the competitive, cumulative and compensatory consequences of action by other nations. The destabilizing impact of global financial speculation, globalization of business and rising inequality on human well-being cannot be effectively assessed or managed at the

national level. The persistence of high levels of youth unemployment and the specter of massive job losses resulting from the 4ᵗʰ Industrial Revolution cannot be eliminated solely on the basis of national economic strategies at a time when the increasing interdependence resulting from globalization subjects national economies to the impact of unstable, rapidly shifting global financial markets, exchange rates, interest rates and dozens of other factors beyond their power to control.

"Among the most important changes needed is leadership in education or rather education for leadership."

The climate threat cannot be addressed through the actions of individual nations alone. National level strategies applied by governments to achieve environmental targets disregard the global consequences of shifting manufacturing to other nations to reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint.

Given the demographics, universal access to affordable, high quality education cannot be achieved in a time-bound manner by incremental expansion of the existing institutions and educational systems at the national level, as now attempted. It requires a global approach that harnesses all the world's knowledge, talent and organizational know-how to fashion a global delivery system for accessible, affordable world-class education. Ideas, strategies and models must be cast in a whole-world context. The problems posed by international migration cannot be addressed by closing borders and building walls, but only by eliminating the political, economic and ecological factors that disburse tens of millions of people from their place of birth.

So too, global cooperative security for all nations can never be achieved solely on the basis of limited collective security organizations, bilateral arms reduction treaties or an NPT that leaves unrivaled power in the hands of a few nations and incentivizes the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other countries. Yet there is little or no intellectual work being done today on global cooperative security or how to achieve it. Our social sciences need to be reoriented to pursue knowledge that promotes the well-being of all humanity. We need leadership in thought that will foster ideas, concepts and strategies, which can serve as the basis for a coherent and integrated vision of humanity's shared future.

Global leadership needs to be guided by a human-centered, multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary theoretical framework. There is an urgent need to reorient the social sciences to focus on people rather than impersonal systems. Unlike the natural sciences which seek to discover the immutable, impersonal laws of nature that govern the physical world, the laws governing human society are strictly man-made and subject to change if we will. Subjective social and psychological factors and processes impacting policies on human welfare and well-being are too often ignored, as great leaders intuitively perceive. This is the truth behind Karl Popper's warning "against excessive naturalism in the social sciences." In quest of the scientific objectivity of the natural sciences, the social sciences have gone too far in their emphasis on

material factors, social institutions and measurable parameters. The effort to reduce human affairs to that which can be governed by algorithms has aggravated this tendency. All great leaders and social achievements depend as much or more on subjective factors as they do on the objective. Roosevelt's New Deal, Churchill's victory in the Battle of Britain, India's Freedom Movement and Green Revolution, Japan and Korea's rise to economic leadership, Germany's reunification, the IT revolution, and the rapid development of the European Union were not achieved by military, political, administrative or economic strategy alone.

The division and fragmentation of scientific disciplines have further compounded the problem. The arbitrary division of Political Economy into Economics and Political Science has divided an inseparable reality on the mistaken and convenient assumption that they can be independently understood and mastered. Every political leader from ancient times knows this is an illusion. This is but one example of the general problem. The division of disciplines has led to the illusory division of the sense of responsibility for the consequences of our actions. The fallacy of this perspective led to the founding of Pugwash and WAAS by scientists responsible for the invention of the atomic bomb who later realized the extreme danger of this division.

A similar intellectual divide prevails between the technological and social sciences today. It is well known that the adoption of automated, labor-saving technologies to improve productivity and competitiveness may increase national income while eliminating employment opportunities, increasing inequality and reducing human welfare. Yet the scientific fields and departments of public administration governing them function independently.

14. Education for Leadership

The success of all these leadership initiatives will require and depend on the content and quality of all levels of the global educational system. For education is the most developed social institution humanity possesses for consciously disseminating knowledge to accelerate the process of social development. Expanding, reorienting and reinventing the educational system to support full and rapid achievement of the SDGs would enhance global awareness, receptivity and preparedness for rapid global social evolution.

Among the most important changes needed is leadership in education or rather education for leadership. Our present system seeks to prepare individuals to survive, live and manage and follow the rules in the external world rather than developing in students the knowledge and capacity to initiate and consciously reshape the world they live in to make it a better place. Leadership education is needed at all levels to shift the focus and equip students with the aspiration and ability to develop themselves and change the world.

Leaders are catalysts for social progress. The results they achieve depend on many other factors. We cannot, with confidence, predict total success within a fixed time frame, nor can we rationally deny the possibility of it. For the velocity and magnitude of social progress during recent decades dwarf that of earlier periods and have brought about astonishing achievements

that were unimaginable or at least appeared unachievable just a short time before they were realized. If history can teach us anything, it is not to underestimate the power of human beings to achieve that which they aspire and work for with full determination. Here too, leadership has a critical role to play in giving us faith in our individual and collective power to realize our highest aspirations. This is the greatest and most essential role of leadership.

15. Nexus of Critical Issues in the 21ˢᵗ Century

While leadership itself appears to be a nebulous, intangible quality, its impact on the world at critical moments in social evolution has been momentous, tangible and concrete. It may arise in response to a challenge or a crisis or the emergence of a new opportunity. But wherever and however it appears, leadership has always been prepared in advance by the appearance of a new idea or ideal, affirmation of a higher value or principle, the formulation of a new vision, and the awakening of a greater aspiration among the populace, to which visionary leaders give expression. The world today is not lacking in information or ideas, but it is lacking in clarity as to how the emerging possibilities will work themselves out in the world and what will be their impact on humanity.

The SDGs represent a clear and focused leadership challenge for the next decade and their achievement is of monumental importance. But they are themselves an expression of broader and deeper issues that need to be addressed in order to effectively guide global development through the 21ˢᵗ century. These critical issues are often perceived as sets of apparently contradictory and mutually exclusive objectives, vested interests, social forces and corresponding questions seeking for answers.

1. **Ecology and Economy**: What consequences will ecological factors have on the future development of global society? How will they limit economic growth, welfare, and well-being? Can solutions be found to mitigate or eliminate the negative impact of increasing economic activity on the environment? How can the aspirations of developing countries for higher standards of living prevalent in the West be reconciled with ecological constraints?

2. **Technology, Employment and Social Welfare**: How can the rapid development of the emerging technologies of the 4ᵗʰ Industrial Revolution be harnessed to enhance human well-being rather than displace and alienate people from the benefits of economic development? How can the continued development of information and communication technologies be reconciled with preservation of individual rights to privacy?

3. **Multiculturalism and National Identity**: How can the inevitable and irreversible movement toward greater frequency and intensity of inter-cultural interactions and the rich diversity generated by increasing multicultural societies be reconciled with the urge to preserve local/national identities and cultural uniqueness?

4. **National Sovereignty and Global Governance**: In a world in which the globalization of business, financial markets, global supply chains, national competition, and offshore tax havens have largely liberated multinational corporations from the constraints imposed

by national level regulation, nation-states no longer possess the levers for independent economic self-management. How can international institutions be strengthened to effectively govern an increasingly globalized economy and society?

5.   **Competitive National Security and Global Cooperative Security**: How can each nation ensure its own freedom for self-determination in a manner that does not threaten or impinge on the equal rights of every other nation? How can the collective security of a group of nations be organized in a manner that does not threaten or perceive to threaten the security of nations left out of the group? How can an inclusive, cooperative global security system be established and governed that minimizes military expenditures yet maximizes the security of all humanity?

6.   **Generation and Democratization of Social Power**: The fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the goals set forth in Agenda 2030 represent an unprecedented acknowledgement of the rights of all human beings and the need to empower individuals for self-development. Today global society possesses greater power to protect and improve the lives of its citizens than ever before. Yet progress is constrained by the resistance to more widely distribute the instruments of social power at the national and global level. How can the inevitable historical movement toward the democratization and dissemination of power be supported and accelerated?

Presently the world lacks even a vision of how these polarities can be transformed into complementary aspects of a greater, more integral whole. The complete resolution of this opposing priorities will require more fundamental changes in values, perception, theoretical understanding, organizing principles, multicultural relations, public policies and actions. Humanity's leadership challenge in the 21st century is to evolve more equitable and effective ways to reconcile these objectives and transform them into complementary elements of a comprehensive pathway for peace, development and human well-being.

16. Lines of Social Evolution

The knowledge required to forge global leadership can draw insight from a study of the past lines of social evolution. These lines stand out clearer in retrospect. Progress over the century has been marked by a progressive shift

*   From isolated, smaller, autonomous, culturally homogeneous communities to larger, heterogeneous, multicultural nation-states giving rise to an increasingly interconnected and interdependent global community.

*   From settlement of disputes by use of violent physical force to negotiated peace and rule of law.

*   From governance by arbitrary authority to freedom, self-governance and self-determination.

*   From military power to economic power, from physical force to the power of science and technology.

- From the rights of privileged elites to universal human rights.

- From the exclusive possession of power by elites to universal human rights and equitable distribution of all forms of social power

- From regarding people principally as a physical resource for manual labor to recognition of their unlimited capacity to enhance their productivity, resourcefulness, innovation and creativity

- From development of natural resources to the development of social capital and the capabilities of each human being through education

- From survival and subsistence to increasing prosperity and well-being

- From emphasis on physical security and wealth generation to human rights, welfare, well-being, freedom, equality and happiness.

It is the challenge of leadership to conceive and perceive the further movement of humanity along these evolutionary lines and to fashion the most effective strategies, organizations and social movements to foster and accelerate that movement.

17. Unanswered Questions

The unfolding future of these evolutionary trends is far from clear. The real task of leadership is to ask difficult questions that others prefer to ignore and seek solutions to both within and outside the framework of values and perceptions that presently limit our ability to address them effectively. Fundamental questions remain to be answered. The questions resolve themselves into two groups—those focused on knowledge and those focused on action.

Knowledge

- How will these multiple lines of social evolution develop and interact with one another in the future and what will be the consequences?

- How can we reconcile continued economic development with ecological security and the rights of future generations?

- How can we ensure that rapid technological advances are made to serve rather than threaten and undermine rising levels of human welfare and security?

- How can nationalities be prepared to accommodate increasing levels of multicultural contact and diversity?

- By what means can the wider distribution and democratization of political and social power at the national and global level be achieved?

- How will nation-states be motivated to cede greater authority to empower effective, democratic international institutions?

- How can human rights and dignity gain primacy over the exercise of power by the privileged and wealthy?

- How can our educational system be transformed into an effective instrument for meeting the challenges of human development in the 21ˢᵗ century?

- By what organizing principle of global governance can the pressing challenges confronting humanity today be reconciled with the contradictions inherent in the self-interested strategies, policies and action of nation-states acting separately and independently from one another?

Action

- What types of global leadership are needed to effectively address the pressing global challenges?

- How can the global leadership gap be filled and where is the leadership to come from?

- What role can nation-states and international institutions play individually and collectively to fill the leadership void?

- What role can civil society, universities, academies and business play?

- What steps can be taken to garner the direct support of the silent voiceless majority?

- What opportunities exist for concerted action and what gains can it achieve?

- How can we combine, coordinate and harmonize leadership initiatives at the global, multilateral, bilateral and national level?

These questions represent knots that have to be untangled, conflicts that have to be resolved. But they also represent opportunities. They contain the keys and the seeds for the future evolution of humanity. They cannot be effectively addressed by mere pragmatic compromises and incremental adjustments. They demand a change in values and perspective which will reveal the unlimited potentials for the future evolution of humanity. The answers to these two sets of questions represent the needed leadership in thought that leads to action.

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